REMARKS

Claims 1-6 are pending in the application. Independent claims 1, 3, 5, and 6 have been amended to recite that the "second" image data processing means is selected from among the "plurality of image data processing means," as claimed. The amendments are fully supported by the application as originally filed.

Claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication US 2003/0115326 to Verma et al. ("Verma") in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication US 2002/0016921 to Olsen et al. ("Olsen"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Regarding the rejection of independent claims 1, 3, 5, and 6 over the proposed combination of Verma in view of Olsen, the proposed combination does not teach or suggest an image processing device or system in which a plurality of image data processing means (including first and second image data processing means) have different security levels, and where an image data processing requesting means verifies a security level of the second image data processing means so that distributed processing can be performed by the second image data processing means, as claimed.

On page 4 of the Office Action of 06/24/2010, FIG. 1 and paragraphs 0152 and 0169 of Verma were cited as allegedly corresponding to the Applicants' claimed "plurality of image data processing means."

Referring to FIG. 1 of Verma, one or more local network peripherals 106, 108 and one or more remote peripherals 114, 116 are connected with a network-based document service appliance 102 (see, e.g., paragraphs 0081-0085 of Verma).

Referring to paragraphs 0152 and 0169 of Verma, it is described that "DMM objects" (where DMM refers to a Document Management Module, as described in paragraph 0086 of Verma, and the main function of the DMM is to store documents in a central document repository) are accessible only by authorized users, and thus depending on a user's access rights, the user can perform operations on documents stored in file folders.

However, there is no teaching or suggestion in Verma of image data processing means that have "different security levels," as claimed.

Instead, it is described in paragraphs 0152 and 0169 of Verma that users may have access rights that enable them to have access to DMM objects, not that the peripherals themselves have "different security levels," as claimed.

On pages 4-5 of the Office Action of 06/24/2010, paragraphs 0089, 0101, 0114, and 0199 of Verma were cited as allegedly corresponding to the claimed "image data processing requesting means" that verify security levels of a "second" image data processing means and request the second image data processing means to perform distributed processing of image data.

However, the above-cited paragraphs of Verma do not teach or suggest anything about checking security levels of the "image data processing means" (e.g., peripherals in FIG. 1 of Verma). Instead, as described in paragraph 0101 of Verma, the status of an appliance queue can be checked by a user. Or, referring to paragraph 0114 of Verma, a Distribution Print Agent 600 determines details such as queue name or printer hostname/IP. Further, paragraph 0199 of Verma refers to access rights of a user.

Therefore, there is simply no teaching or suggestion in Verma of checking security levels of a "second" image data processing means in order to request that the second image data processing means perform distributed processing.

On page 5, second paragraph of the Office Action of 06/24/2010, it was admitted that the Verma reference does not teach or suggest verifying security levels, but it was alleged that such verification is disclosed in paragraphs 0033 and 0067 of Olsen, which describe the use of identifying data contained in a card, or entered via a PIN or the like.

However, there is still no teaching or suggestion in the proposed combination of Verma in view of Olsen of a plurality of image data processing means (e.g., peripherals such as printers) that have "different security levels," and where an image data processing requesting means verifies the security level of a "second" image data processing means so that distributed processing can be performed by the second image data processing means.

For at least the reasons discussed above, the proposed combination of Verma in view of Olsen does not teach or suggest the Applicants' claimed invention. Therefore, independent claims 1, 3, 5, and 6 and dependent claims 2 and 4 are patentable over the proposed combination.

It is believed that the claims are in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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